

# South Africa FELTP

## Background and Goals

Established in 2006, the South Africa Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (SAFELTP) was developed to address the increasing burden of infectious and non-infectious diseases among the estimated 47.4 million inhabitants of South Africa.

## Program Structure

The SAFELTP, based in Johannesburg, is a 2-year applied program that trains public health leaders while providing epidemiologic services to health authorities in South Africa.

The program places emphasis on service as residents pursue a Master of Public Health awarded through the University of Pretoria. The SAFELTP offers two tracks: one in Applied Epidemiology and one in Public Health Laboratory Practice. Residents spend 35% of their time in classroom instruction and 65% in field assignments.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through its Division of Public Health Systems and Workforce Development, is supporting the program by assigning two resident advisors to provide technical assistance in developing training materials, teaching and mentoring program residents, and giving consultation on priority public health issues in South Africa.

## Program Objectives

The primary objective of the SAFELTP is to train public health leaders in applied epidemiology and public health laboratory practice, with an emphasis on problem-solving to provide public health service to the national and sub-national health authorities in South Africa. The program also aims to strengthen the culture of critical thinking in the public health community.

While in the SAFELTP, residents are expected to improve public health in South Africa by conducting outbreak investigations and control, evaluation of surveillance systems, economic evaluation of public health programs, and surveillance data analysis.

Residents also provide recommendations to improve public health, train other health workers, and disseminate their findings through various presentations and publications.



## Funding and Partnerships

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global AIDS Program; Division of Laboratory Systems
- South Africa National Department of Health
- South Africa Provincial Departments of Health
- National Institute of Communicable Diseases
- National Health Laboratory Service
- University of Pretoria

## Program Accomplishments

SAFELTP residents have presented their research at national and international scientific conferences. One resident received the prestigious John Snow Award for Outbreak Investigation and another one won for Best Poster Presentation at the 2008 Global Scientific TEPHINET conference in Malaysia.

In addition, the SAFELTP is involved in hosting the 2010 Global Scientific TEPHINET conference in Cape Town, in December 2010.

The SAFELTP has conducted more than 20 outbreak investigations, including the following:

- Disease due to a novel Arenavirus, Gauteng,
- Cholera, Limpopo,
- Influenza, Northern Cape,
- Rift Valley Fever,
- Legionnaires disease, Mpumalanga, and
- Meningococcal meningitis, Eastern Cape.

The SAFELTP has been responsible for over 20 surveillance evaluations, including the following:

- Evaluation of the Viral Watch Surveillance Program, Gauteng, 2005–2007,
- Forecasting of notifiable medical conditions to enable better resource management in Port Elizabeth ahead of the 2010 World Cup,
- Evaluation of laboratory-based surveillance system for Shigella, selected sites,
- Evaluation of Rabies Surveillance System, Eastern Cape,
- Appraisal for quality of expanded program of immunization data in one district, Mpumalanga, and
- Antenatal sero-prevalence survey on HIV and syphilis, Kwa-Zulu Natal.



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